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C O N F I D E N T I A L RIGA 000507

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/09/2034

TAGS: [IR](#) [KNNP](#) [LG](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#)

SUBJECT: LATVIA RE: IRAN - AGREE WITH USG POSITION, LOW PRIORITY, EXPLORING DIRECT AIR CONNECTION TO IRAN

REF: A. (A) RIGA 00491

[¶](#)B. (B) SECSTATE 103219

Classified By:

AMBASSADOR JUDITH GARBER FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary: Latvia publicly supports the USG position on Iran. This stance, could, however, be complicated by the possibility of Latvia's national airline pursuing a direct flight from Riga to Tehran. End Summary.

[¶](#)2. (C) Latvia fully supports the USG strategy to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue and has publicly supported this strategy. In response to last week's demarche regarding negotiations with Iran (reftel A), the Latvian MFA issued a press release expressing hope that the P5 1 negotiations with Iran will succeed and stating that Iran should create "confidence that its nuclear program is intended for purely peaceful aims." This press release follows on the heels of President Zatler's speech to the UN General Assembly, in which he encouraged Iran to abide by the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

[¶](#)3. (C) In response to reftel B demarche Raimonds Oskalns, Head of the Arms Control Division at the Latvian MFA said that Latvia will continue to speak up regarding Iran, when appropriate, and will keep the issue on the table at the EU. Mr. Oskalns also expressed concern that the Iranians are using the negotiating process to buy time and said that Latvia will probably not make new public statements until they see whether or not Iran will keep the promises listed in reftel B.

[¶](#)4. (C) Mr. Oskalns also stated that although Latvia completely agrees with the USG position, Iran is not one of Latvia's top foreign policy priorities. He noted that it is difficult for him to convince higher ranking officials in the MFA to closely follow the situation and to approve public statements about Iran.

[¶](#)5. (C) According to Mr. Oskalns, Latvia currently has no business ties to Iran, but he did disclose that Air Baltic, the Latvian-government-controlled national airline, is in the early stages of exploring a possible direct flight from Riga to Tehran. He said that although the Latvian government has political concerns regarding this possible connection, the Transportation Ministry wants Air Baltic to pursue the link, which they believe will be profitable.

[¶](#)6. (C) Comment: Although Latvia agrees with the USG position on Iran and actively supports that position, the reality is that Latvia's attention will remain focused on local and regional issues, including the current severe economic crisis. End Comment.

GARBER